

REMARKS

Claims 21-27 (Group II) have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer in response to the Restriction Requirement and Applicants elect the invention of Group I. Claims 1-20 remain in this application.

Claims 1-9 and 12-19 were rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,961,548 to Schmulewitz. The Examiner refers to Figures 6a-6c, col. 3, lines 9-17, and col. 4 line 59 to col. 5, line 47. In the method steps of Figures 6a-6c in Schmulewitz, delivery catheter 40 is inserted along guidewire 60. After delivery of the graft, the catheter 40 and guidewire 60 are withdrawn, followed by insertion of guide wire 65 through the graft into the contralateral iliac artery. Claims 1, 6, 12 and 19, as amended, distinguish over the Schmulewitz patent. Claim 1 requires, inter alia, that the first sheath includes a slot opening at the distal end. This allows the first sheath to be removed as the slot accommodates the second guidewire. This structure is supported in the specification on page 17 and the drawings (e.g. Figure 8B). Schmulewitz does not teach or suggest such slot as he requires the guidewire to perforate or pass through the graft. The anticipation rejection of claim 1 should therefore be withdrawn.

With respect to claim 6, in addition to the specific steps concerning insertion into the carotid arteries, the claim requires that the stents and grafts are inserted subsequent to insertion of the first and second guidewires. In contrast, Schmulewitz withdraws the first guidewire before inserting the second guidewire. Claim 12 includes this recitation as well as the step of providing a second delivery sheath positioned within the first delivery sheath. In Schmulewitz, the second graft is delivered after the first delivery catheter is withdrawn; the two catheters 60, 45 are inserted separately. Thus, Schmulewitz does not have the method steps of claim 12. Claim 16 recites that the second graft portion is positioned within the first graft portion during delivery to the common carotid artery. No such structure or method is disclosed or suggested in Schmulewitz wherein the delivery catheters and stents are inserted separately. Therefore, for at least these reasons, the rejection of claims 1, 6, 12 and 16 as anticipated by Schmulewitz should be withdrawn.

Claims 2-5, 8, 9, 11 and 17-20 depend from claims 1, 6, 12 or 16 and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons that the independent claims are believed patentable.

Claims 10-11 were rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,529,988 to Colombo. The Examiner refers to Figure 7 and column 20, lines 18-44. Claim 10, as amended, recites the step of removal of a delivery catheter to expose first and second delivery sheaths which have coaxial

portions. Support for this recitation can be found for example in Figure 12C. No such structure is disclosed in Colombo. Colombo does not disclose such catheter nor coaxial arrangement. Therefore, withdrawal of the anticipation rejection is respectfully requested. Dependent claim 11 is believed patentable for at least the same reasons that claim 10 from which it depends is believed patentable.

Claims 1-20 were rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,156,063 to Douglas. The Examiner refers to Figures 7A-7G and col. 10, line 45 to column 11, line 61. With respect to claim 1, Douglas does not teach or suggest the slot opening at a distal end. The two limb tubes 23, 25 are shown positioned side by side in Douglas. Also, Douglas utilizes a guidewire 27 which is folded upon itself. The present claims recite inserting separate guidewires. The step of inserting separate guidewires is also recited in claim 6, as is the step of inserting the first and second grafts subsequent to insertion of both guidewires. Claim 10, as amended, recites a delivery catheter removed to expose the two delivery sheaths which have coaxial portions. Douglas lacks such method step. Claim 12, as amended, recites in conjunction with the insertion step that the second delivery sheath is positioned within the first delivery sheath. The sheaths in Douglas are positioned side by side and wire 27 is folded upon itself. Claim 16, as amended, recites in conjunction with the insertion step that the second graft portion is positioned within the first graft portion. Such orientation is not disclosed in Douglas. Consequently, Douglas does not anticipate independent claims 1, 6, 12, and 16.

Dependent claims 2-5, 8-9, 11, 13-15 and 17-20 are believed patentable for at least the same reasons that independent claims 1, 6, 12, and 16 are believed patentable.

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is now in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should the Examiner believe it would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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